

What it is

A process for accessing your inner wisdom

What it can do

This tool can assist you to:

- Access your personal inner storehouse of wisdom.
- Discover answers to important questions.
- Coach others in accessing their inner wisdom.

How it works

This tool is available online at: stproject.org/resources/tools-for-transformation

Step 1 CENTER

- Center yourself.
- Imagine your inner wisdom to be a mirror-like pool of water. The unquiet mind makes ripples on the surface of the pool distorting its images. Centering helps to quiet the mind and to bring our deeper knowing into focus.
- Use any centering method you find helpful (deep breathing, meditation practice, prayer, relaxation techniques, physical practices such as yoga or Chi Kung, etc.).
- Do not proceed to Step 2 until you have become relatively centered. Take as much time as you need.

Step 2 ASK

- Ask a simple, direct question.
- Choose questions with care, being precise about what you want to know. You will receive back exactly what you ask for.
- Direct your question inward, perhaps focusing on a specific part of your body. Some find the center of their intuition to be the forehead/brain. Others find it helpful to direct questions to the heart or belly.
- Close your eyes if this helps you to focus.

Step 3 RECEIVE

- Receive your response.
- Remain open to whatever comes up in response to your questions. Do not evaluate or judge the response.
- Responses may come in different forms: words, images, bodily sensations, energy, a felt sense of “knowing.”
- Pay particular attention to what you receive immediately after asking. If you are centered, the first response is usually the clearest.
- Like all energy, intuition comes in waves. There will usually be one clear (first) wave of information.
- Notice when this wave is over and you begin to think, analyze, or evaluate what you “heard” or “felt.”
- Stop immediately when this shift occurs. Very important. Stay in the 4-Step Process – try not to allow yourself to begin normal “thinking” about your problem.
- Remember or record the response accurately. Take care not to omit, add, or interpret what you “heard” or received.

Step 4 APPLY

- Apply what you have received.
- Do you understand what you received in response to the question? If not, you can ask clarifying questions.
- Have you received sufficient information for now? Very often you will have additional questions in order to feel complete.
- If you seek further information, formulate your next question here, in Step 4.
- You will be repeating the 4-Step Inner Knowing process, but before going back to Step 1, make sure you have a clear question.
- Then, imagine yourself putting your question up on a mental shelf. Go back to Step 1 – Center. When you feel centered, take your question “off the shelf” and ask it (Step 2).

Repeat steps 1-4 as needed, until you feel complete.

Additional tips for each step

Step 1 CENTERING

- Take as much time as you need to center.
- You may use any technique that works for you.
- Do not, in any conscious way, think about your question during Step 1.
- Do not proceed to Step 2 until you feel relatively centered. If there is high mental agitation, this may take some time.
- If you attempt Step 2 without feeling centered, you typically receive mental chatter rather than intuition.
- If you continue to have difficulty calming the mind, wait until you feel relaxed, and try again later.

Step 2 ASKING

- Strange as it may seem at first, you get back exactly what you ask for. Therefore, learning to ask good questions is a crucial skill in working with intuition.
- It is easiest to use questions that can be answered in one or two simple phrases.
 - For example, a question like, *“What should I do with my life?”* will generate lots of static.
- Take complex questions and break them into smaller, bite-size questions. For example, if you want information about a new project, you might begin with a question like:
 - *“What’s the most important thing I need to know about this project?”*
 - or *“What is the very first step I must take?”*
- Yes or no questions are especially easy for receiving clear direction.
- Avoid loaded questions with built-in assumptions or bias, like *“Why is so and so being unfair to me?”*
- Be very specific. You get back exactly what you ask.
- Locate your questions in time.
 - For example, if you ask the question, *“Is it right to leave my job?”* You might get the answer, *“Yes.”* But this might mean a year from now or five years from now.
 - A better question would be: *“Is it right to leave my job now?”*

- Clearly define your terms.
 - For example, the question *“Will the campaign be successful?”* is potentially ambiguous with regard to the word “success.”
 - More targeted questions would focus on specific goals:
 - For example: *“Will our campaign reach its goal of more city investment in our community?”*
 - or *“Will our campaign be successful in building community power?”*
- Make sure you ask what you really want to know.
 - For example, you might ask: *“Will _____ be a good partner for our organization?”*
 - But might you really want to know: *“Is _____ the best possible partner for our organization?”*
 - or perhaps: *“Should we engage _____ as our partner now?”*
- Ask simple rather than compound questions or potentially confusing questions
 - For example: *“What do I need to do to improve my relationship with my partner and my child?”* or *“How do I cut back on my work and take better care of myself?”* may need different guidance for each part of each question.
- If you get stuck, a good all-purpose question is: *“What do I need right now?”*

Step 3 RECEIVING

- If you are centered before asking, the first information is usually the clearest.
- Watch carefully for the difference between what was “received” and your rational mind’s reactions and interpretations. There will be a distinct shift in energy at this point.
- To evaluate the reliability of an inner message, “taste” the quality of energy or tone of the message:
 - The content of messages is a completely unreliable guide to their validity. We may “hear” things that sound very smart, but are not our inner knowing. All our sub-personalities have read the same books we have.
 - Inner knowing has a very distinctive taste, aroma, quality of energy. Come to recognize your own.

- It's relatively easy to discern what voices are *not* inner knowing. Be wary of:
 - Anyone in there trying to sell you anything. Intuition carries no hype – more a feeling of just simple “is-ness”.
 - Self-judging, self-critical or harsh voices. These are not inner knowing. Many of our inner voices are negative. We never have to listen to these again!
 - Self-important, inflated voices (often the flip side of unworthiness).
 - Intense emotional charge – this is usually not inner knowing (although release of held-in emotions may help in getting clear enough to hear our true inner voice).
- Look for and listen to the qualities of energy that you want to have in your life: peace, compassion, clarity . . . Your inner knowing will feel like these.
- Answers may come in different forms:
 - Words
 - Visual images
 - To help clarify images, you can dialogue with the image, literally letting yourself speak as the image
 - Bodily sensations
 - To help clarify bodily sensations, e.g., a tight feeling in the belly, let that bodily sensation speak out loud. You may also ask it questions, like: *“Belly, what are you trying to say to me?”*
- Sometimes answers may come later from outside ourselves. Sometimes a person, unsolicited, will offer you guidance on the question you have been wrestling with. The answers to your questions may also come to you while you are looking at something in nature, or in the form of “coincidences,” signs or omens.
- You get what you need to know, not what you want to hear.
 - We often seek a kind of control that is not real. But inner knowing invites us to surrender – to have radical trust in ourselves and in the natural unfolding of things.
 - For example, very often our questions are simply an expression of anxiety about the future– not because there's actual information we need now or anything we actually need to do.
 - Inner knowing most often lets us know what we need to know right now.
 - Albert Einstein said that, *“Problems cannot be solved at the same level of thinking that created them.”* Our questions often arise inside of a paradigm or box and are insolvable from within that frame.
 - Another way of saying this is that often the “problems” to which we're seeking solutions don't actually exist other than in our minds.
 - Therefore, our answers from intuition often come from a different level than the question we asked – like the answer of the Zen master to the

disciple who, in response to a question, may hit the student with a stick or shout a “nonsense” word.

- You don't always get an answer. Why not?
 - The way you have asked the question may not be answerable.
 - You may be resistant to hearing the answer. Sometimes we don't allow ourselves to know because we're not ready to take responsibility for resolving a situation.
 - It may be “useful” for you not to know the answer just now. Our intuition sometimes understands that we may need to let things simmer or wrestle a while with uncertainty.
- Remember faithfully the responses you receive.
 - It can be helpful to write down exactly what you see/hear/feel.
 - Don't leave anything out.
 - Don't add anything other than what came spontaneously in the first wave.

Step 4 APPLYING

- Do all your question-designing in this stage.
- You can use both your rational mind and your intuition in helping to decide what to ask next.
- Be wary of interpreting the response you received in Step 3. We often need to seek more guidance from our intuition.
 - For example, if you ask about a relationship and the response is an image of the two of you pulling apart, this might mean that you are to end the relationship.
 - It could also mean that the two of you need more space from each other while staying in the relationship.
- When you have your next question, either write it down or simply place it on a mental shelf in your mind

Overall tips:

There are innumerable ways that people have of accessing their intuition. The gift of the 4-Step Process is that we can focus and direct our intuition, and use it in very practical and immediate ways to support our leadership and lives.

- One of the most important tips is to never let anything come between Step 1: Centering and Step 2: Asking.
 - If you Center and then start thinking about what question to ask, you will quickly become uncentered.
 - This is why we do the designing of questions in Step 4. We place the question to the side, Center ourselves, then “pop” the question and direct it into our inner knowing.
- We keep repeating the 4 Steps until we feel complete. By staying with the process, we can often resolve very complex issues.
- The Inner Knowing Process can be likened to training wheels on a bike.
 - As you feel more connected with your intuition, you may no longer need the structure of the 4 Steps.
 - While using the 4 Steps, you may enter a kind of intuitive flow where answers start coming even before you ask questions. This is great – not at all a problem. Just stay in the flow as long as information is coming clearly.
 - If the flow stops and there is more you want to know, you can then again start using the 4-Step Process to get re-focused.
- Use inner knowing to help you with the process of asking and receiving. You can even use intuition as a kind of consultant (e.g., “*What question do I need to ask right now?*” or “*Am I complete?*”)
- Intuition cannot be pushed or forced. If you find yourself resistant, it’s usually best to take a break and try again later.
- For really major decisions, check out what you hear before acting.
 - Use your capacity for sober reflection as a check and balance. Re-ask several times over a period of time.
 - Use your most trusted friends and colleagues as sounding boards.
- But do act on the guidance you receive!
 - The point of accessing intuition is to use it to improve the quality of our lives and the effectiveness of our actions.
 - When we are not acting on information that we already received, we may find our intuition blocked until we do so.
 - When we act using our inner guidance, quite simply, *our life works better!*

The 4-Step Process in coaching

The 4-Step Process is not only a powerful tool for self-mastery – it is equally potent as a transformational coaching technique.

By assisting clients in finding their own answers, we:

- Help build our client's confidence in their ability to solve their own problems
- Teach them a valuable tool for self-mastery

When coaching, our primary roles are:

- **Step 1. Centering:**
We remind our clients to center, and can assist them by guiding them in breathing or relaxation.
- **Step 2. Asking:**
We verbally ask the questions to our client, freeing them from having to put the questions “on the shelf” and the challenge of keeping from thinking about the questions while centering.
- **Step 3. Listening:**
By staying attuned to the client, we can usually pick up when they have shifted from receiving intuition to normal mental processing. We can then invite them to stop and report out exactly what they hear/saw/felt.
- **Step 4. Applying:**
We collaborate with the client in understanding the answers and determining what else they would like to know. We help create the next question, and remember it for them. We guide the process of asking and listening until the client has received what it is they wish to know.